

COMMISSION MINUTES

July 10, 2013 Meeting

A meeting of the City of Fitchburg Water / Wastewater Commission was held on July 10, 2013 at the JA Provincial Building, 1200 Rindge Rd, Fitchburg, MA.

The meeting commenced at 4:50 p.m.

Members present: Lenny Laakso, Commissioner DPW
Rick Healey
George Siener
Michael McLaughlin

Members Absent: Ronald Lubianez
Carol Brown

Others present: Janet Morrison
Denis Meunier, Deputy Commissioner Water
Joseph Jordan, Deputy Commissioner W.W.
Mary Jane Franklin, Clerk

ITEM # 1: Approval of last meetings minutes:

The minutes for the May 29, 2013 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.
(Please Note: the commission did not meet in June 2013.)

ITEM # 2: Public Forum:

1 person from the public attended.

ITEM # 3: Water Division:

- **Discussion and approval for submitting a Water Supply Protection Grant Application to the Commonwealth for the purchase of sensitive watershed land:**
Mr. Meunier introduced Janet Morrison of North County Land Trust and they discussed the acquisition of watershed land which are currently privately owned. A parcel of land owned by the Kirby family has potentially become available and Ms. Morrison and Mr. Meunier will be working on a Water Supply Protection Grant which reimburses the City 50% of the purchase price. A petition to City Council requesting authorization to use water enterprise funds will need to be submitted in order to pay the land owner prior to being reimbursed by the grant.

Over the last few years Fitchburg has been successful in obtaining land thru the Forest Legacy Grant, which is a federal grant reimbursing the City nearly 100% of the cost of the land. The State Watershed Protection Grant is not offered every year although the City has used it in the past to acquire watershed land.

In 1993 the Water Department did a survey and analyzed all of the privately held watershed parcels and prioritized them as high, medium or low if they became available to purchase. In the last few years approximately 300 acres have been acquired either thru a conservation restriction or a purchase. In 2007 a conservation restriction on the northern watershed was sold to the Division of Fish and Wildlife, who paid The City just under \$1M to have access to that land for passive recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, etc. Half of that money went to the general fund and the other was put into an escrow account in the Water Enterprise Fund specifically designated to purchase and maintain watershed land this pool of money will be used to fund the purchase of the Kirby land contingent on receiving the state Grant.

A motion to approve the submittal of the Water Supply Protection Grant application and to recommend the petition before City Council was made by Mr. McLaughlin and seconded by Mr. Siener. It was approved by unanimous vote.

- **Department Vacancies:**

Mr Meunier reminded the commission that the distribution crew is down to four from six employees. In addition one crew member has an injury requiring surgery and will be out for 2 to 6 weeks leaving the distribution team with a staff of three. Mr. Meunier reported that the vacant positions were funded as part of the approved budget, but was awaiting approval from the Mayor and Human Resources pertaining to his request to fill the two positions. In addition, a pending contract with an “on call contractor”, who can provide backup assistance when needed is awaiting final signatures from all parties.

Mr. McLaughlin requested a staffing plan.

- **Status of Ashby Compensating Dam repair:**

Mr. Meunier gave a brief history of the Ashby Compensating Dam explaining that it was originally built to compensate Ashby residents for water rights that Fitchburg acquired many years ago. The dam has two depressed areas and Fitchburg is responsible for its upkeep. It is currently listed in poor condition and a plan is in place to bring the two depressed areas up to grade and level off the crest of the dam, which would put it in a much safer condition. After meeting with the Ashby Conservation Commission and The Ashby Selectman, it was decided the work will begin the week of September 8th. The pond will need to be lowered four feet to make the necessary repairs. Notification will be sent to all abutters in August. There was some discussion about Ashby taking responsibility for the dam.

ITEM # 4: Wastewater Division:

- **Project(s) Status:**

Mr. Jordan reported that the CEPT upgrade was nearing completion with only a few items left to do. The plant staff is still working on fine tuning the process. There have been a few effluent limit violations due to difficulty eliminating the solids inventory in

secondary system. After working with the design engineer, decreasing Leominster's sludge and modifying the chemicals there has been noticeable improvements.

CSS2B – Daniels, Walton and Milk areas have been completed with the final paving done.

CSS3C – Albee, Canton, Heywood and the first Railroad sections will be completed soon. There have been some change orders that will use up contingency funding, they are outside the original scope of work, but have been identified as important and need to be repaired. Contractor has been given an extension with the final paving being done next year.

CSS4D - Boutelle St., John Fitch and the college area. Bids were received in early June. Wright Pierce has recommended not awarding to the low bidder as there have been several "red flags" with this company. There has been a real apprehension by the purchasing department to make a decision to award this contract. It is likely that contract award deadlines specified in the EPA consent order will be exceeded due to these delays. Fitchburg has been warned that there will be fines if the construction deadline is missed.

CSS4? Is in limbo and most likely the deadline will be missed.

The final phase of upgrades at the East Plant are in the planning stage. Mr Jordan will be meeting with the designer and hopes to go to bid next year at this time. There is a 2015 deadline with 18 months of construction expected.

- **FY 2013 year end summary:**

Mr Jordan reported that the preliminary figures are ahead of the projected schedule and that there is a possibility that rates will not have to be raised again in the next ten years.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2013 at 4:30 pm at the Water Office.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Minutes Prepared by: _____

Mary Jane Franklin

Senior Clerk